



Posted: May 30, 2003

**CITY OF NORFOLK  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**for**

**VIRGINIA ZOOLOGICAL PARK  
(THE VIRGINIA ZOO)**

**MASTER PLAN AND BUSINESS PLAN**

**Strategic development of a Master Plan and Business Plan that will position the Virginia Zoo for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

**OVERVIEW**

The Virginia Zoological Society and the City of Norfolk are requesting proposals for professional services to help the Society define the Virginia Zoo's mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The scope of services will create a ten-year strategic development plan that includes a master plan, business plan and a competitive analysis of the Zoo's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat (*S.W.O.T.*). Fundamental goals of the Society are the exhibition and interpretation of an exotic collection of wildlife that meet both current and future standards as measured by the community, United States Department of Agriculture, and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums. These goals need to take into consideration the Zoo's service to the community, fiscal stability, market expansion and a preliminary analysis of funding partnerships for the redevelopment of the Zoo.

**BACKGROUND**

The Virginia Zoo began when the City of Norfolk established an urban park in 1899 as a community recreation facility, complete with a bandstand, playground and botanical gardens. In 1900, the park began acquiring "zoological specimens on exhibit" and by 1901 the park officially had 123 mammals, 65 birds and 33 reptiles. Many of the city park's historical structures, including the original bandstand and botanical conservatory, were preserved and integrated into the Zoo's exhibits. In 1974, the substantial growth of animal population necessitated that the animal area be fenced off from the public park, thus creating Lafayette Zoological Park. In the late 1980's, the Zoo superintendent systematically removed or renovated substandard exhibits and in 1985, the facility was renamed The Virginia Zoological Park at Norfolk, or Virginia Zoo. In 1987, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) accredited Virginia Zoo.

Virginia Zoo is an urban zoo located on 53 acres of land bordered by the Lafayette River on its east side and Norfolk's historic Granby Street on the west side and is situated in a federally designated Empowerment Zone. The Zoo currently houses approximately 450 animals representing 115 species. The Zoo operates as a partnership between the City of Norfolk and Virginia Zoological Society. The City of Norfolk operates and employs staff for animal care, maintenance, horticulture and grounds, and admission attendants. Virginia Zoological Society oversees and employs staff for educational programming, marketing and public relations, development and membership, retail, and food services/concessions. Additionally, both the City and Society have onsite administrative and bookkeeping support staff.

The cost of operating the Zoo is \$4.2 million. Of this, \$1.5 million is generated through donations and programs, such as membership, gift shop, restaurant, education programs and special events. Approximately \$620,000 comes through gate admissions, and the remaining \$2 million is provided by the City of Norfolk. Annual attendance in CY2002 was 291,099.

The largest expansion in the Zoo's history began in 1992, when the City of Norfolk and Virginia Zoological Society adopted a Master Plan, drafted by Design Consortium, Ltd. of New Orleans, LA. Capital fundraising began shortly thereafter and the \$15.8 million naturalistic, immersion exhibit featuring African wildlife opened in May of 2002. A 23,000 square-foot Education and Visitor Center opened in December of 2002. These capital projects, and associated upgrades to pathways and parking areas, totaled \$22.7 million, of which \$10 million was provided by the private sector and nearly \$13 million by the City of Norfolk. The next capital project that is currently funded is an interactive prairie dog exhibit, which will be constructed in the late summer and fall of 2003, with a grand opening in the spring of 2004.

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

This request for proposals is an invitation to qualified and interested firms to submit proposals for this project. The Zoological Society is seeking a consultant planning team whose experience demonstrates an ability to perform this level of comprehensive analysis specific to a facility of the nature described for Norfolk and other like institutions nationally. The selected consultant(s) may also need to procure the services of other qualified firms in completing the scope of work outlined in this request for proposals. It is the intent of this Request for Proposals that all services shall be prepared complete in all respects without the need for engaging separate technical expertise or professional services through a separate contract.

The selected consultant(s) services shall include the following. Additional services beyond those listed may be required, including but not limited to the design of exhibits and facilities, at the request of the Owner. Services may also include performing presentations and attending review meetings with zoological organizations and local review boards and officials and fund raising events as required.

#### **Summary Analysis of Existing Facility<sup>1</sup>**

- Current programs
- Animal care facilities
- Visitor amenities
- Visitation/visitor profile
- Attendance, traffic & parking
- Existing building evaluation summary
- Existing utilities summary
- Impact of zoo on surrounding neighborhood and adjacent Lafayette River

#### **Strategic Development Plan**

- S.W.O.T. analysis
- Market analysis
- Economic impact analysis
- Attendance & operational projections
- Public/private funding partnerships
- Business plan

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<sup>1</sup> Zoo staff will provide historical attendance figures, visitor survey data, and complete site plan and blueprints of current zoo.

## **Master Plan**

- Concept development
- Exhibit plan/organizational theme
- Proposed animal list
- Education interpretive plan
- Visitor amenities & guest services
- Enhancements to landscaping/public pathways
- Facility support services
- Traffic, attendance & parking projections
- Visitor circulation plan
- Vehicular circulation plan
- Service & operations plan
- Proposed utilities upgrade
- Statement of probable costs, including escalation

The consulting firm shall provide to the Virginia Zoological Society 40 copies of the completed report.

## **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Proposals should list previous experience and similar types of projects, including scope of work, client, status of project, and year work was performed. Appropriate brochures, photographs, or printed materials may be submitted, as well as resumes and backgrounds of key principals, associates, and staff individuals. Information should be provided regarding proposed minority participation, either in terms of personnel within the organization or sub-consultants. Finally, the proposal should contain a written statement attesting that the firm maintains an errors and omissions liability policy with a minimum limit of \$1,000,000. In no event shall your proposal, including all attachments, brochures, covers, and dividers, exceed 30 sheets of paper.

The proposal must include the following information:

1. Proposed scope of services, including planning approach and research methods to be employed;
2. Qualifications of firm and personnel, and proposed subcontractors, including resumes of key personnel who will actually work on this project. An organizational chart of the planning team, including project responsibilities and key team members should be included;
3. Demonstrated experience in related public, educational and exhibit-related projects of a similar nature, and references from clients from similar projects;
4. Project schedule, including review dates by client and dates that principal deliverables will be due;
5. A non-binding detailed estimate of the total cost of the project including an itemized list of fees and costs for each of the major project components. **This must include all other associated expenses in completing the project; the Owner in addition to the direct fees will incur none.**

Proposals submitted in the public procurement process are subject to public inspection in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Therefore, trade secrets or propriety information must be clearly identified to prevent their disclosure, and the reason why protection is required must be stated (City Code Sec. 33.1-9).

## **SELECTION CRITERIA AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

Evaluation of proposals will be under the complete jurisdiction of the City of Norfolk and the Virginia Zoological Society. A selection committee, representing the City and the Society, will review and evaluate all proposals submitted. The proposals will then be ranked in order of qualifications, general experience, and reputation of the project team. The committee shall engage in individual discussions with two or more firms deemed fully qualified, responsible, and professionally competent on the basis of initial responses. After completion of these discussions, the committee shall select, in the order of preference, two or more firms whose proposed services are deemed most

meritorious. At that time, the committee will enter into negotiations with the first choice firm to determine agreeable terms of compensation for service. If negotiations cannot be successfully completed with the first choice firm, the committee will then enter into negotiations with the second choice firm, etc. Upon completion of negotiations, a formal contract agreement will be prepared and executed between the Consultant and the City of Norfolk.

In determining the successful vendor, the City and the Society will evaluate the following criteria:

- The degree of creativity demonstrated in the proposal;
- The credibility of the procedures and data proposed to accomplish the research process;
- The experience of the staff to be assigned to the work and the firm's experience in similar projects;
- The time required for completion of the project.

Selection process will be based upon the submitted materials as well as an in-person presentation/interview at the Virginia Zoo located in Norfolk, Virginia. The interview date will be determined by the City of Norfolk and the Virginia Zoological Society. All expense associated with material development and presentation will be borne by the vendor candidate. All data, documents, databases and other products used or developed during the preparation of reports will belong to the Zoological Society upon the completion of the project.

All proposals are due no later than **3:00 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2003**, in the office of the Director of Public Works, City Hall Building, 810 Union Street, Room 700, Norfolk, Virginia 23510. Ten (10) copies of this proposal shall be submitted. Should there be any questions concerning the requirements of the proposal or scope of work, please contact Lewis Greene, Executive Director of the Virginia Zoological Park at (757) 441-2374 or Christopher J. Smith, Senior Architect at (757) 664-4600.

John M. Keifer  
Director of Public Works

Virginian Pilot: June 1, 2003  
New Journal & Guide: June 1, 2003